

**UCC***United Community Corporation*

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A brief history and description of the United Community Corporation, formed one year ago to help develop and coordinate the City's war on poverty, was presented last night to a panel of the Newark City Council by Dean C. Willard Heckel, president of the corporation.

In a 16-page statement Dean Heckel, who is dean of Rutgers Law School, spelled out some of the UCC's "growing pains," and paid tribute to the people of Newark for helping to create a community action program "which many cities envy."

The unique 58-member board of trustees, which will be expanded to 68 by 1967, is better than 50% non-white, Dean Heckel noted. He suggested, though, the possibility of broader representation from both the community and government, and most important, he added, while the ratio of poor has improved on the Board "we are still not satisfied with their share."

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Pointing out early difficulties, Dean Heckel said the small staff was pressed for immediate action and the need for programs. This, he added, was at times, somewhat frustrating. He assured the panel, however, that "the programs that were approved and subsequently funded, seem to be working quite well."

On the matter of staffing Dean Heckel explained that a concerted effort failed to locate enough local talent for all staff positions. However, he pointed out, of the 34 employees since hired by the Corporation, 26 reside in Newark, five in Metropolitan Essex County, one in Union County, and two in New York.

Turning to program development Dean Heckel reported that approximately one-third or \$56,700 of the first program grant of \$184,122 received by the UCC last February went to the development of three area boards, located in the Central Ward. Funds for three more such boards are now available and within two months applications will be made for funds to organize three more to make a total of nine boards that will provide a city-wide network for organizing the grass roots community in community action programs, aimed at improving conditions for the poor of Newark.

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In addition to the Central Ward boards--Project Concern; Operation We Care; and Peoples' Action Group--boards are planned for Northeast Newark, the Ironbound, Northwest Newark, Weequahic and Vailsburg.

Area board representatives, Dean Heckel explained, are not only involved in the process of organization and program development at local levels, and also play a role in formulating various city-wide programs.

They participated in the development of the Newark Pre-School Council and are represented on the Council's Board of Trustees. The Council is the delegate agency for the development of year-round pre-school programs, in churches and social agencies that have had no prior experience in the field of child care. Other area representatives were part of the personnel committee established by the Newark Board of Education to recruit and screen individuals who applied for positions as teacher aide and teacher-in-training for "Operation Head Start", which ultimately employed more than 300 local residents to work with some 2900 pre-school age children.

A number of other programs both current and proposed involved Area Board representatives. These are the Summer Neighborhood Block Recreational Program, administered by the

Police Athletic League; the Blazer Community Employment Training Program, to provide work training for 200 welfare clients; a Small Business Development Center; a project to provide legal services for the poor; a city-wide senior citizens program, being developed by Newark's Senior Citizen Commission, among others.

"What the corporation is articulating here," Dean Hockel explained, "is the right of the poor to participate in anti-poverty programs, not only as recipients of a service, but as program developers, employees and policy makers."

While this process evolved, he said, sub committees of the UCC program committee, known as Task Forces, composed primarily of Newark residents, were studying and acting on proposals submitted to the corporation. These included "Head Start", the Summer Remediation Program administered by Queen of Angels Church; the Seton Hall High School Head Start Summer Program; the Newark Pre-School Council; and the Mt. Carmel Guild Pre-School Readiness Opportunity Project (PROP).

The employment task force like education and community action chaired by members of the Corporation, who are not members of the Board, approved proposals for the Jewish Vocational Service Career Oriented Preparation for Employment (COPE); the Blazer Council Work Experience Program; and the Mt. Carmel Guild Youth Chance.

All programs which have received funds from the government, did not go through this process. Approval of the corporation was not required in all instances of programs affecting Newark. However, where such approval was required or requested by the Office of Economic Opportunity, it was provided by the Corporation. These programs included: The Housing Authority Neighborhood Youth Corp Proposal, the Board of Education Work Study Proposal, the City Administration's Neighborhood Youth Corp Proposal, the Welfare Title V Work Experience Proposal and the Bureau of Employment Service Youth Opportunity Center Proposal.

At the same time the Corporation is restructuring the Board of Trustees to allow for voting at large, specific representation from all Area Boards as well as pertinent branches of the City government, and young people starting at 15 years of age.

The Corporation, Dean Heckel declared, as one of its primary functions insures utilization of funds in a creative way. Therefore, programs were initiated to approach problems from preventive as well as remedial standpoint. As an example, the Corporation president cited the case of Neighborhood Youth Corps graduates who would be looking for work upon completion of training.

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To meet this need expansion of various social service programs is in the planning stage to make room for pre-professional and sub-professional jobs. In addition, expanded on-the-job training programs are being sought.

In the area of preventive programming the Corporation has moved ahead with implementation of pre-school educational programs on a year-round basis, and is working closely with the Board of Education to link the anti-poverty act with the Education Act for the benefit of Newark's school children.

A number of steps have been taken to insure vitally needed total community coordination and cooperation. Naturally, this included the Municipal Government and others, and upon recommendation of the Executive Committee of the United Community Corporation, the Mayor established a Coordinating Committee for the development of human resources under the Business Administrator. This committee, composed of representatives from agencies and organizations that receive or could receive anti-poverty funds, or funds through other relevant legislation meets bi-weekly. It is a vehicle for keeping the Mayor informed on all matters relating to program activities, Dean Heckel explained.

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The Corporation has also worked closely with other city departments such as the Senior Citizens Commission of Newark; the Board of Education; the City Museum, participating along with the Mayor's office in the development of a proposal for a city-wide arts and culture program; the Department of Welfare, screening welfare recipients for the Blazer Program; the Police Department, in connection with the Summer Neighborhood Block Recreation Improvement Program, which provided recreation, camp experience, and work training opportunities for Newark youth.

Finally, the Bureau of Employment Service, Division of Employment Security has provided counselling and guidance services for various Neighborhood Youth Corp Projects and has been utilized as a source of staff recruitment, screening and evaluating candidates for this Corporation.

The late President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address stated that the torch has been passed on to a new generation and implored communities to begin the reconstruction of democracy. We have begun in the City of Newark. The United Community Corporation has dedicated itself to creating a better day for citizens, some of whom have suffered for generations from the ravages of inequality and poverty. With the help of the City Council, the Mayor and the community itself, we will win this fight.

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A copy of Dean Heckel's statement is attached.